



Installing a new trunked two-way radio system at Sellafield, the UK's largest nuclear site, further strengthened our presence within the nuclear industry.

Avoira were selected for the project at the Cumbrian plant based on our experience of deploying telecommunication solutions in the unique and challenging environments that exist on a nuclear licensed site.

This includes provision of two way-radio communications for Sellafield Ltd, Magnox, Westinghouse, Urenco, British Energy.

Our experience also includes the supply, installation and maintenance of integrated command and control systems for the Civil Nuclear Constabulary who are responsible for policing all UK civil nuclear sites.

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Business Needs

Sellafield Plant Maintenance Manager Carl Pettigrew says the introduction of the new system was essential to improve on-site communications which serve around 100 staff.

“Previously we have utilised two-way radios with no infrastructure support and we simply were not getting the coverage,” he said. This was not due to the size of the facility, but its physical make up. “It’s not a vast area but there are a lot of coverage issues due to the amount of steel reinforcement and thickness of concrete structures blocking radio signals” he explained.

Trusting in Avoira’s expertise Mr. Pettigrew accepted our recommended system specification, submitted after an extensive site survey.

“Avoira brought portable radios and supporting infrastructure to site and carried out testing across all areas of our facility to assess and demonstrate that the required coverage could be obtained.”

Our Solution

Five Simoco X-fin MPT1327 blades were specified, each containing a trunked controller and UHF repeater station. With integration into the Sellafield telephone system, calls can be transferred from the radio to any telephone extension on site and vice versa.

The X-Fin system operates with three fixed control room radios and Motorola GP680 keypad hand portables. The installation, testing and commissioning from the old to the new was, says Mr Pettigrew, a “seamless transition.”

He reports too that as well as Sellafield looking at extending the system, its external CCTV inspection provider is considering purchasing handsets so it can make use of the system. “There are clearly some other teams out on plant who could benefit from having their own radio sets,” he confirms.

The radios are capable of transmitting calls between individuals or groups and on occasions where priority or emergency calls are necessary, the channels will automatically close down calls to provide capacity for these calls to be made.

Business Benefits

The Simoco-Motorola combination is yielding significant benefits beyond the primary demand of enhanced coverage

“We’re currently using three of five available channels selecting one for the operations team, and two others for maintenance teams so there’s capability to add more as and when required. The whole system is scalable too so we can add more radios or extend the system coverage,” says Mr Pettigrew.

“There are some excellent features such as conference calling and lone worker monitoring and we’ve the capability to segregate groups onto different channels whereas before we had to share just the one.”

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